



**Embassy of the United States of America**

*Dakar, Senegal*

*Ambassade des Etats-Unis*

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**Remarks by U.S. Ambassador Janice L. Jacobs  
U.S. Independence Day Reception  
Le Meridien President Hotel  
Dakar, Senegal  
July 3, 2007**

Excellencies, Ambassadors and members of the diplomatic corps,  
Distinguished guests, dear friends and fellow Americans,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the U.S. Embassy and President George W. Bush, I would like to thank you for joining us today to celebrate the 231st anniversary of the signing of the U.S. Declaration of Independence—a bold assertion that governments must derive their power from the consent of the governed.

In a 21<sup>st</sup> century world defined by democratization and globalization, it is easy to forget what a revolutionary document it was. The then-daring premise that “all men are created equal” and have “inalienable rights” to include “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” not only led to a bloody war but also changed the course of world history. It was the launch of an historic and ongoing experiment, based on an unshakable faith in the sanctity of the individual and the strength of forging unity out of diversity.

Senegal, a relatively young nation with its own historic roots and traditions, is also in the midst of this experiment. With presidential and parliamentary elections recently conducted and a new government in place, Senegal is poised to make more strides in building a prosperous economy on the foundations of sustainable development and democratic freedoms. Both our nations understand that democracy is not a singular event. It is a continual process, one that demands the leadership of not just heads of state and governments, but also the active participation of individual citizens.

But Senegal and the United States have much more in common. Our peoples are diverse, dynamic, creative and resourceful. We both exercise leadership and make valuable contributions to the global community. Like the United States, Senegal is well known for its role in mediating regional conflicts and contributing to peacekeeping missions. We also share a deeply held belief in religious tolerance and interfaith understanding. In fact, freedom of religion is the very first protection offered in our Bill of Rights.

As you all know, Dakar is preparing to host the next summit of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, with which the United States has observer status. Last week, President Bush announced that he will appoint a special envoy to the OIC. This envoy will listen to and learn from representatives from Muslim states and advance our interest in respectful dialogue and continued friendship.

On the basis of these common values, the United States and Senegal are working together on many fronts, such as promoting increased trade and fighting the global battles against HIV/AIDS, trafficking in persons, and international terrorism. We will work together to combat the growing problem of drugs being trafficked through the region. We also strongly

support Government efforts to find a lasting peace in the Casamance so that every region of Senegal can grow and prosper in ways that help the entire country.

Our relationship with Senegal is based on partnership, not paternalism. In the words of Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, "we seek to use America's diplomatic power to help foreign citizens better their own lives and to build their own nations and to transform their own futures."

U.S. Government assistance to Africa has seen a three-fold increase over the past five years, and our assistance to Senegal totaled \$55 million in 2006. The visit of First Lady Laura Bush to Dakar last month not only demonstrated the close ties between our two countries, but also highlighted our commitment to supporting Senegal's efforts to secure its future through public health and education.

But assistance alone is not enough. Trade and investment are just as important to Senegal's future. Through the Millennium Challenge Corporation, we are continuing to work with the Government of Senegal to conclude a Compact focusing on the Dakar-Diamniadio toll road—an infrastructural upgrade that holds the promise of reducing poverty, attracting investors, enhancing regional and international trade, and creating new jobs.

The African Growth and Opportunity Act, or AGOA, seeks to promote increased trade and investment between the United States and Africa by offering one-way trade preferences to countries that meet certain criteria related to democracy, good governance, and economic openness. And through our USAID-funded West Africa Trade Hub in Dakar, we are working with local businesses and other stakeholders to help Senegal take full economic advantage of its strategic location as a regional hub and gateway to the African continent.

I could cite more examples of close cooperation our two nations enjoy, but if you would allow a personal comment before I conclude: Later this month, I will depart Senegal as U.S. Ambassador to take up the post of Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Consular Affairs in Washington, D.C.

I have traveled extensively throughout Senegal during my tenure, and I have been impressed and at times amazed by the energy and generosity of the Senegalese people. I owe many of you here this evening my personal thanks for your hospitality, insights and advice. As a diplomat and as an American citizen, I have been honored and touched by your willingness to introduce me to your views, your lives, your businesses, your families, and your homes.

I must say that a certain sadness comes with my impending departure, but I leave with a great sense of pride in the fruitful and durable relations between our countries. I also harbor hope for the people of Senegal, a generous and ambitious nation that has much to offer to the world.

July 4 offers Americans time to reflect on the sacrifices made by so many to secure the liberties we prize so dearly. On a day when the United States celebrates the blessings of democracy, I salute not only American patriots past and present—but also the people and Government of Senegal for their shared commitment to the ideals of peace, justice, and the rule of law.

Thank you again for joining us for today's festivities, and I wish you all a pleasant evening.

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